Utah beekeeping industry

Robert Graham, Spring City, represented the Utah beekeeping industry at the National Honey Board's Nominations Committee meeting, held Oct. 2 in Phoenix, Ariz.

Robert Graham

Graham was elected by the state beekeeping industry and appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to represent Utah. Utah beekeepers produce over 1.5 million pounds of honey annually.

Graham met with representatives from across the nation to nominate members to serve on the National Honey Board. The National Honey Board develops research, advertising and consumer information programs to increaes the demand for honey.

A beekeeper for 35 years, Graham manages 1,600 colonies of honey bees for honey production. He is a past president and currently a director of the Utah State Beekeeping Association.

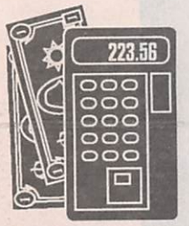
10-29-92

Bee business a lesson in industry for family

BY LOUISE O. BAIRD

26 Dec 1992

When my husband, Jim, and I began our family almost 30 years ago we were already professionally established and did not face the financial stresses most new families experience. Despite relative prosperity, we knew we needed to make a conscious effort to manage our affairs wisely.



Resource management

Principles of provident living and self-reliance taught in the Church welfare program are more than a blueprint for temporal well-being; they are spiritual laws which build character and bring a multitude of blessings to those who obey.

An influential decision made in those early years was to continue to operate the small family bee business that Jim and his brother Wilford took over when their father died unexpectedly in an accident. Although both brothers had college graduate level professions, they recognized the value of the honey business for providing our children with opportunities for learning how to work and to contribute to our families' resources in a meaningful way.

Eventually our family welcomed 11 children and Wilford and his wife had eight so there have been many workers, but there has always been something for everyone to do.

Church News

From an early age, both boys and girls participate in canning the honey and putting the containers into boxes. As they grow older they graduate to extracting honey, working with the hives in the bee yards, and moving the bees from yard to yard and into orchards to pollinate fruit in the spring. Even those who are allergic to bees keep records.

Although income from honey sales has enabled our children to build savings accounts to prepare for school, missions, and marriage, the money earned has been far down on the list of benefits our family has derived from the bees.

The experience of sharing a family enterprise has provided a real laboratory for learning the rewards of hard work, sacrificing to reach worthy goals, and the importance of every person's contribution to family welfare.

In family home evening recently we asked our children to express their feelings about how we manage family resources. In a lively discussion they concluded that our family has developed some ways of thinking about possessions as guidelines that contribute immeasurably to peace and happiness in our home.

We have found that following a few basic principles enables a family to make day-to-day financial decisions almost automatically and without stress or conflict. Following are ideas which our children identified as having significance in our family's welfare plan.

The earth is the Lord's and all possessions are granted as blessings. The resources we have been given are a sacred stewardship that we are obligated to manage righteously. Paying tithes and offerings is only the beginning. Magnifying our callings, serving missions, helping our neighbors, and striving to keep the commandments become natural expectations, not major decisions, when we acknowledge the source of our blessings.

Photo by Stuart W. Johnson

Sarah Baird and brother, Robert, stack boxes of honey as part of their work in family bee business.

Money is only important because it enables us to accomplish three things: (1) take care of ourselves, (2) contribute to building the Kingdom, and (3) help others. Material possessions have no worth in and of themselves and are not achievements or sources of status. Everything our family has belongs to all of us. Each person knows his needs will be met and his wants respected. The question we ask when considering purchases is "do we need it?" not "can we afford it?"

The practice of giving allowances does not work for us because it suggests each child is entitled to a part of the family's income as a personal share. We prefer to regard everything as being available to all according to need. When the children were younger we kept a China bowl full of dollar bills that they were free to take as needed for lunch, school supplies, or other expenses. The money bowl was not misused because it was always available.

Our children appear to have learned to be undemanding, they spend money reasonably, share possessions freely, and accept without resentment the fact that from time to time one child needs and receives more resources than another. Sometimes it's difficult buying gifts for each other because we tend to get things when they are needed and don't think of possessions as expressions of love.

Because everything we have belongs to all of us, taking care of our resources is also everyone's responsibility. In addition to bee work, our children have been expected to help care for younger brothers and sisters, do household chores, and work in the garden. But they have never been asked to work to "help your mother." If our home really belongs to the whole family, and not just to Mom, everyone should willingly share the work to maintain it without have to be asked.

This attitude shifts the role of parents from being taskmasters to that of partners with children in teaching and encouraging each other in managing family affairs. When family work is motivated by the natural consequences of diligence or neglect rather than imposed rewards and punishments, a home climate of harmony and cooperation usually prevails.

• Louise Baird is a member of the Edgemont 10th Ward, Provo Utah Edgemont North Stake, but serves in the BYU 49th Ward, Brigham Young University 15th Stake, where her husband is bishop.

Bees keep land of milk and honey buzzing

AP Special Features 3M-5-95

If the buzzing of honeybees were suddenly to go silent in the countryside, much of agriculture would shut down, too, says the Meredith magazine Successful Farming.

Production of crops like apples, almonds, berries and melon crops would virtually disappear, for the lack of pollination. There would be no seed for alfalfa and clover. The honeybee is an important pollinator of crops like soybean, sunflowers and cotton.

Some 65 million acres of United States crops depend at least partly on insect pollination, and honeybees handle most of the work. The honeybee's value to agriculture as a pollinator of crops is worth an estimated $10 billion annually, according to Science magazine.

Honeybees are unlikely to become an endangered species, experts agree. But the beneficial insect no longer can be taken for granted, either.

The honeybee industry is being hammered by several forces: a severe outbreak of mites, the invasion of Africanized bees and the recent loss of the federal honey price-support program. Large imports of cheap honey, mostly from China, have added to the industry's woes. Moreover, honey prices in fall 1994 were about 25 percent below 1993 levels. As many as 20 percent of the nation's commercial beekeepers have gone out of business since 1990.

Wild bees used to help with pollination of crops. But the spread of parasitic mites has nearly wiped out feral honeybees in the United States. The mites have taken a heavy toll on maintained colonies as well, and mite control adds an input cost that beekeepers can ill afford now. "The mites caught a lot of beekeepers by surprise," says Roy Weaver, a Texas beekeeper and honey-packer. "But the biggest issue is the lack of profitability in the industry."

If there's a bright spot in the industry, it's the growing demand for pollinator bees, says Blane White state apiary inspector in Minnesota. "In the long term, pollinat services may become the majo source of income for beekeep White says.

25 Aug 1996

The Daily Herald

Bees know more than we thought

TODAY'S SCIENCE TOPIC IS: Insect Intelligence. I don't know about you, but I've always taken comfort in the idea that insects are stupid. For example, if I'm outdoors and a bee lands on me and starts walking around on my head — causing me to turn rigid with fear, terrified that, if I move, the bee will become angry and sting me in the eyeball — I've always reassured myself by thinking: "This bee does not wish to harm me! Its tiny brain is confused! It thinks I am a flower!"

Dave Barry

The Miami Herald

But now I have received, from alert reader Greg Stevens, a news item by the Reuters (pronounced "Associated Press") news service concerning an experiment, conducted by bee scientists at the Free University of Berlin, suggesting that bees are not so dumb after all.

The article states that these scientists, whose names are "Lars" and "Karl," set up various landmarks between a beehive and a bee feeder. After the bees had located the feeder, Lars and Karl started changing the locations of the feeder and landmarks. The surprising result: Lars and Karl were both killed by eyeball stings.

No, seriously, they discovered that the bees were locating the feeder by COUNTING THE LANDMARKS. Yes! Bees can count! This means that bees, in terms of math skills, are ahead of most American high-school graduates. It also means that, contrary to my earlier belief, when a bee is walking around on my head, it knows exactly where it is and what it's doing. It's thinking: "Ha ha! He thinks I'm looking for a flower, when in fact I am here for the express written purpose of watching him turn rigid with terror while I poop in his hair! I can't wait to get back to the hive and tell everybody the landmark coordinates for THIS bozo!"

The German discovery makes you wonder what ELSE bees have been hiding from us. For example: I have always wondered how they REALLY obtain honey. I do not believe that they make it themselves. What would they use for utensils? I've never made honey, but I have made fudge, which belongs to the same chemical family (technically, the "Family Of Things You Can Put On Ice Cream") and I know for a fact that you need, at minimum, a stove and a candy thermometer. My guess is, if you were to poke around in the bushes near a beehive, you'd find piles of empty plastic squeeze bottles shaped like little bears.

But here's what really concerns me: If bees can count, the logical assumption is that they can also read. Therefore, I wish to make a sincere announcement to any bees walking around on this newspaper: I DID NOT BLOW UP THE HIVE NEAR EVAN THOMPSON'S HOUSE IN ARMONK, N.Y., IN 1961. I WAS PRESENT, BUT IT WAS EVAN WHO LIT THE CHERRY BOMB. PLEASE DO NOT HURT ME. IT IS VERY FUNNY WHEN YOU POOP IN MY HAIR. HA HA! I BELIEVE EVAN STILL LIVES IN THE NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA. THANK YOU.

Here is another troubling thought: Bees are not the only smart insects. I have here an item from the November 1995, issue of Popular Science, alertly sent in by Frank Schropfer, which states that cockroaches can display intelligent behavior EVEN WHEN THEIR HEADS HAVE BEEN REMOVED. I don't know about you, but I didn't even know cockroaches HAD heads. I thought that, as members of what biologists call the "Family of Animals

(See BARRY, Page A10)

BARRY:

25 Aug 1996
Bees

(Continued from Page A9)

That It Is Morally OK To Drop An Unabridged Dictionary On," cockroaches were just icky little brown bodies with legs and feelers sticking out. But it turns out that they do have heads, and according to Popular Science, they "can live for several days" without them. But here's the amazing thing: Researchers have found that cockroaches, when their heads are removed, immediately start performing country-style line dances.

No, seriously, Popular Science states that headless cockroaches can, when prompted by electrical shocks, LEARN TO RUN A MAZE. Without heads! They can learn a maze IN 30 MINUTES. I seriously doubt that headless humans could beat that time, although just to be sure we should definitely run some experiments using volunteer Tobacco Institute scientists.

I also think we should find out what, exactly, the researchers do with the cockroach heads. You would definitely want heavy security for those babies. You would NOT want them to fall into the wrong hands.

TOM BROKAW: In our top story tonight, terrorists have threatened that, unless the United States government gives them Cincinnati, they are going to dump cockroach heads into the nation's vulnerable supply of movie popcorn. For the Clinton administration's reaction, we go now live to White House press secretary Mike McCurry, who has a statement.

McCURRY: I'm going to throw up. In conclusion, we see that the issue of insect intelligence is not as simple as we thought it was before we started to think about it. So the next time a mosquito lands on our arm, and we are tempted to whack it, we should pause and remind ourselves that the mosquito is a thinking being just like us; and that, with proper training and encouragement, it might be able not only to count and run mazes, but perhaps also to laugh, to sing, to philosophize, even to write poetry.

And then we should whack it. Because we hate poetry.

Army using bees to monitor chemicals

By DAVID DISHNEAU
Associated Press Writer

EDGEWOOD, Md. — They're busy as bees, and the Army spies on their every move, counting their comings and goings, sniffing them, even gauging the amount of wind generated by their wings.

Thousands of honey bees have been put to work at the Aberdeen Proving Ground, enlisted as environmental monitors to detect traces of escaping chemical weapons at one of the nation's most toxic dump sites.

Their mission: Simply to do what bees do, buzzing from flower to flower, gathering nectar and pollen and, inadvertently, particles of everything else they happen to touch.

"A honey bee is probably nature's most superb monitor of materials," said Jerry J. Bromenshenk, a University of Montana biologist who designed the project for the military base near the top of the Chesapeake Bay.

"You've got a little flying fuzzy creature with electrostatically charged hairs," he said. "They're like flying dust mops."

The trick is shaking out the dust. In a half-dozen previous projects at other contaminated sites, Bromenshenk periodically vacuumed bees from their hives, ground them up and studied their remains.

AP Photo

Bob Seccomb, a graduate assistant at the University of Montana, checks bee hives at the Edgewood area of Aberdeen Proving Ground Monday in Edgewood, Md. Seccomb and another colleague are using common honey bees to monitor pollution in targeted areas of the country.

This project is more sophisticated, with 14 beehives enclosed in wooden boxes shaped like two-drawer filing cabinets that are loaded with high-tech instruments.

Infrared beams across the entry slots record the comings and goings of each hive's 10,000 residents. The hives are constantly weighed while other devices measure and chart their temperature and humidity.

"In some ways," said Aberdeen spokesman George Mercer, "it's easier for citizens to trust honey bees than it is to trust a bureaucrat."

Army enlists bees to find toxic leaks

Little 'flying dust mops' are analyzed for any traces from chemical weapons.

Associated Press 9-29-96

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